



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **READING DRUG KINGPIN INDICTED ALONG WITH SIX GANG MEMBERS**

### **Drug Ring Allegedly Distributed More Than \$1 Million Of Crack Cocaine In Reading**

READING – United States Attorney Patrick L. Meehan and Berks County District Attorney Mark Baldwin, today announced the unsealing of a sixty-one-count indictment<sup>1</sup> charging seven defendants with operating a major drug ring, the "NINTH and MUHLENBERG STREET GANG ("NMSG")," centered in Reading, Pennsylvania. Each of the defendants is charged in the indictment with conspiracy to distribute in excess of 50 grams of "crack" cocaine that subjects each defendant to a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, a ten year mandatory minimum, a \$4,000,000 fine, and up to lifetime supervised release on this count alone. The indictment also charges defendant CARL LEE HEGH with a violation of the drug kingpin statute based on his role as the organizer leader and manager of NMSG. As a result, upon conviction, HEGH faces a 20 year mandatory minimum and a maximum of life imprisonment.

The indictment specifically alleges that between August 2004 and November of 2005, CARL LEE HEGH and EDWIN COLONA-SANTOS purchased large amounts of cocaine and crack cocaine from suppliers in New York City and Reading, which they distributed to retail customers in the Reading area. The indictment further charges that HEGH and COLONA-SANTOS controlled the NMSG that distributed more than \$1,000,000 of crack cocaine in the vicinity of 9<sup>th</sup> and Muhlenberg Streets in Reading.

"The leaders of this gang believed they owned that area," said Meehan, "to the point where, as indictment indicates, they had no second thoughts about selling crack near an elementary school on at least six occasions."

This indictment is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a joint initiative by the United States Attorney's Office, the Berks County District Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the Reading Police Department, the Berks County Sheriff's Department, and other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to identify and prosecute firearms offenders in federal court,

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<sup>1</sup> An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

where the defendants are likely to receive a substantial sentence upon conviction. This investigation was initiated by the Reading Area Violent Crime Task Force (RAVCTF). The RAVCTF, comprised of the above agencies, was established to assist local law enforcement agencies in Berks County in combating violent crime, and is paying particular attention to the violence associated with gangs and drugs.

Today's indictment is the sixth of a Reading drug trafficking group since September of 2002. Since September 1, 2001, when Project Safe Neighborhoods began, 111 defendants from Berks County have been indicted, 87 convicted, and 23 are awaiting trial.

#### INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

NAME	ADDRESS	AGE OR DATE OF BIRTH
<b>CARL LEE HEGH, a/k/a "C Note"</b>	S. 12th Street Reading, PA	10/14/1973 (32)
<b>KEVIN ORTEGA</b>	S. 17th Street Reading, PA	8/28/1968 (37)
<b>EDWIN SANTOS-COLONA a/k/a "Eddie"</b>	S. 13 <sup>th</sup> Street Reading, PA	9/28/1975 (30)
<b>JULIO ESTRADA-ROSADO</b>	S. 9th Street Reading, PA	1/9/1985 (20)
<b>RAMON COLON-VALENTINE</b>	Maple Street, Reading, PA	2/1/1987 (18)
<b>EDWIN MOLINA</b>	S. 11 <sup>th</sup> Street Reading, PA	3/24/1984 (21)
<b>LUIS ALEX RENTAS, a/k/a "Alex"</b>	S. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street Reading, PA	8/5/1986 (19)

The case has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Francis C. Barbieri, Jr., and Special Assistant United States Attorney M. Theresa Johnson.

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